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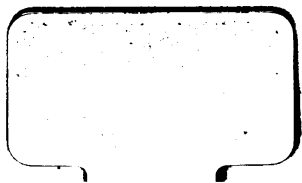
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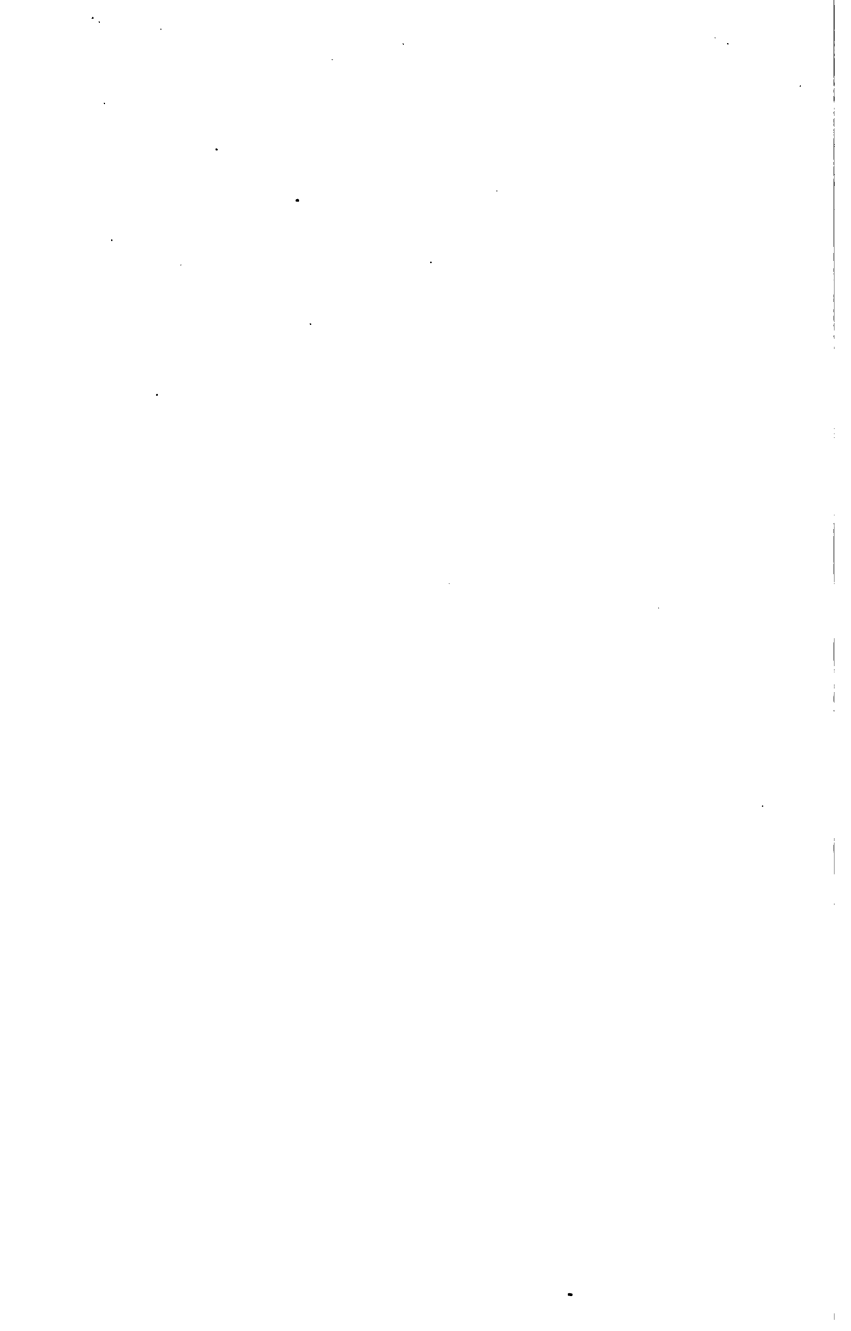
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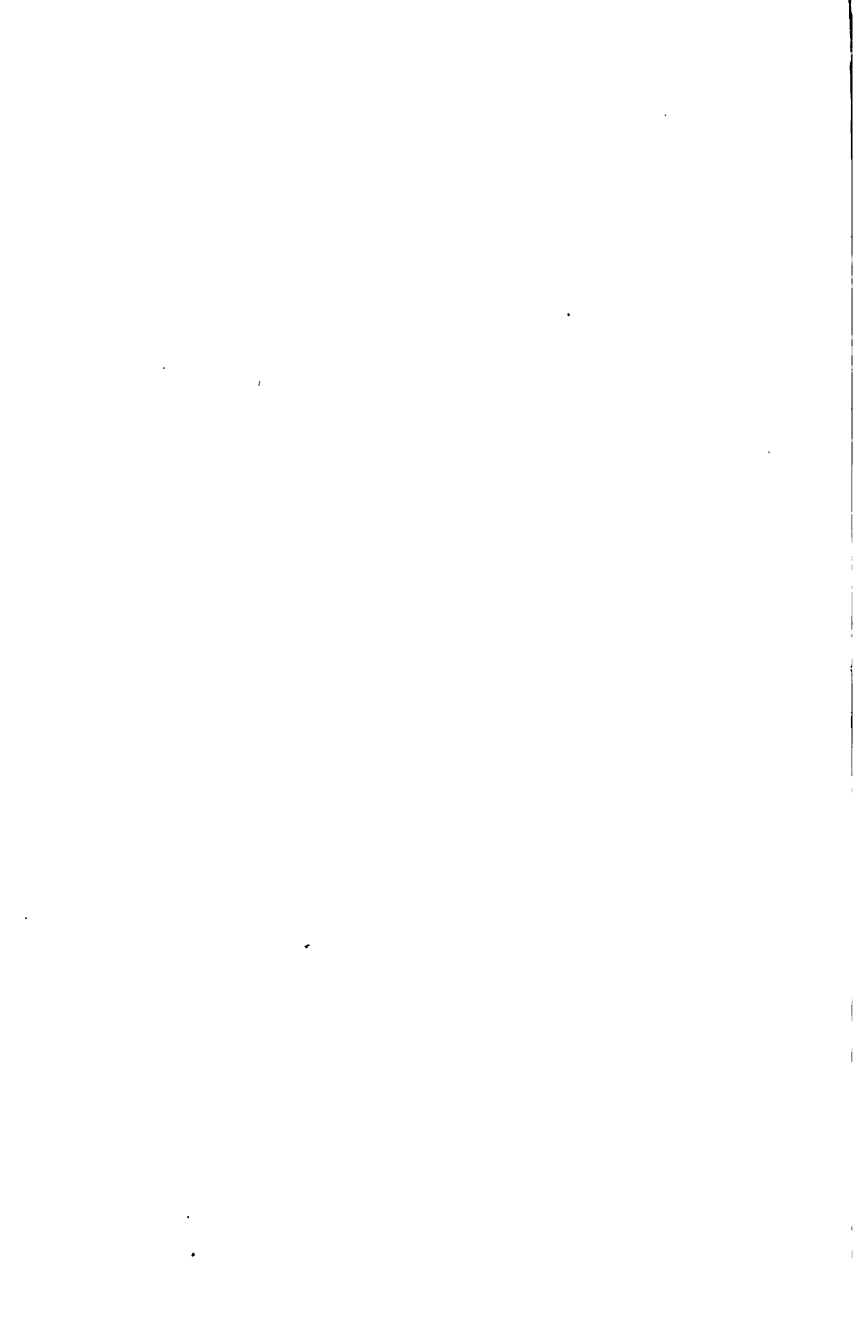
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CRICKET



C R I C K E T

BY

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CRICKET

I

BATTING

CRICKET may for descriptive purposes be divided into two separate classes: (1) Batting, (2) Bowling and Fielding. There are certain conditions of wicket when the attacking party may be said to be the batsmen and the defending party the bowlers; on other conditions of wicket exactly the contrary state of things is brought about. In a hot summer, when the wicket is true and fast, English bowlers can bowl a good length, but few can turn the ball or cause it to come at different speeds from the ground when delivered at the same pace before reaching the ground. The batsman has, therefore, comparatively an easy task, and

instead of devoting his mind to merely keeping his wicket from falling, *i.e.* to defensive purposes, he attacks, and makes run-getting his primary object; but on a soft, caking wicket the bowler has a good time of it, and becomes the attacking party, while the ordinary run of batsmen have to defend. In the present chapter, therefore, I propose to treat of batting under two distinct heads: first, when the wicket is true and hard, and against the bowlers; and second, when the wicket is soft and tricky, and in favour of the bowlers.

Thirty years ago wickets generally were more in favour of bowlers than they are now, for the mowing machine and the heavy roller make modern wickets like billiard tables. Whereas on the old grounds you had to prepare your mind for an occasional bumping ball as well as a dead shooter, now, in years like 1896, for instance, you can assume that the ball will come true and of a certain altitude, and may play accordingly.

A batsman can generally tell what the

wicket is going to do even before he begins batting, the state of the weather for a week previous and the reputation of the ground will be enough, and he will go in with a light heart and look forward to a pleasant hour. There are many sorts of players. There is the batsman whose temperament, if he is not sure about the length of a ball, will lead him to try a smack, while another will play at the same ball carefully. There are some, like Abel, who absolutely refuse to hit at any ball except those that exactly suit their fancy, and those particular balls they will hit for four; there are others, on the contrary, like O'Brien and Jessop, who, when they get set, seem to have the power to hit balls of any length or pace. W. G. Grace in his prime did not appear to hit, in the sense of putting out the whole of his strength; in fact he did not hit, strictly speaking, except sometimes to leg and a cut, but he had the supreme art of pushing the ball for four and placing it out of the reach of the field. Of course Grace's play is a feature by itself, unique, un-

approached and unapproachable. In making comparisons between this and that player, or sets of players, it is always understood that Grace is left out of the question—his standard, so far as batting is concerned, is to be looked at, not emulated. Those who never saw him in his prime, like our University players of to-day, can never know what cricket was when Grace was king ; for half-an-hour of Grace's batting was to bowlers and field what Rudyard Kipling says of the Zulus and the British soldier :—

“ An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.”

Half-an-hour of Grace's batting found the bowlers demoralised, the fields at their wits' end, the captain tearing his hair, and this not once or twice only, but week after week, year after year.

To return, however, to our batsman who on a hot day steps out to try his luck at the wicket, at the beginning of a match when the ball is red and the wickets very green,

a very fast bowler on at one end and a medium pace at the other. Now some bats have what to others is an extraordinary knack of playing back on fast wickets to fast bowling; and all Nottingham was probably talking, in 1897, of Gunn's great innings in the Notts and Surrey match. It was reported that the feature of that innings was Gunn's back play to Richardson. Back play by most bats to Richardson on a fast wicket would simply result in a waste of strength by a fruitless movement of the bat, a noise among the stumps, and a walk to the pavilion. But Gunn has in these days, and Carpenter had in the sixties, the power, given to few, of playing back to fast bowlers; and this power must be found out for the batsman by the batsman himself, and, if found to answer, persevered in. Hardly a coach and teacher exists who would teach a boy to play back to fast bowling unless the ball is very short; it is far easier for the general run of bats to play forward, for the great pace of the ball makes it a gift to be

quick enough to come down on the ball before it is past the bat. To an ordinary player it is wise to say that the ball of which you must be careful when you first go in is a very fast and short ball that you must play back to, but which is very likely to bowl you before you have got accustomed to the pace of the ground. You must be careful of such a ball; you must concentrate your mind on stopping it; and the obvious truth must be pressed home again, that, for at any rate a quarter of an hour, defence, not attack, must be your one consideration; and to the fast bowler the best advice for most batsmen is to make forward play the backbone of your play. There are players like Jessop, of Cambridge University and Gloucestershire, whose play is all hit. Such players have a splendid eye, often only staying about fifteen minutes at the wicket, but during that time scoring about a run and a half a minute. An ideal side ought to have at least one such hitter in its ranks. A great deal of the success of the various Australian elevens was due to the

fact that some great hitter or hitters were to be found who, in a few minutes, used sometimes to turn a match. Of course such players must carry out their regular tactics. They are almost to a certainty weak in defence, and so they had better trust to their eye and play their own game.

About nervousness nothing can be said. Every cricketer who is played for his batting is nervous, and if you hear anybody say he does not know what it is to feel nervous, catalogue that individual as one of many who do not like their true feelings to be known of men. Now we will suppose our friend, after a single, to have got down to the other end and to be preparing to meet the medium pace bowler, who has the power of changing his pace. If it is necessary to be careful for a quarter of an hour to fast bowling, it is probably correct to say that you had better pay respect to a "dodgy" bowler for half-an-hour before you play a free game. With the fast bowler you may assume that the pace for every ball is very much alike ;

but with the medium dodgy bowler like Lohmann this is not by any means the case ; if you hit at all wildly you will find it easy to mis-hit, and if you leave your ground the wicket-keeper finds it easy to stump you. Let the different principles necessary for playing fast bowling and slow be here briefly examined.

Before going further, it must be remembered that each age has its characteristics, and that what was deemed true and correct, and even indispensable, in old days, is now criticised and not acted upon by a new and sceptical generation. Formerly it was a universally received axiom that to fast bowling the right foot must be kept firm as a rock—not the whole of the right foot, for when you are playing forward, the tip of the five toes of the right foot only must touch the ground, the back of the heel pointing straight to the sky ; but the whole of the right foot must never be shifted except when you move it across to cut. Be careful to distinguish between cutting and off-driving.

They are quite distinct, and one important difference between them consists in the fact that in off-driving, the left foot is moved across; in cutting, the right. G. H. Longman is the only instance I can call to mind of a man who cut with the left foot across, and his cutting consisted of beautiful timing of the ball, and more of a drive than a cut. But Prince Ranjitsinhji, whose wrists resemble small serpents, steps back to fast bowling, and with that marvellous quickness of his, hits the shortest fast balls all round the wicket. This, however, is a gift that I have never observed in anybody else, and I incline to the old opinion, that the right foot should never be moved to fast bowling except to cut. If anybody tries Prince Ranjitsinhji's methods with less than his suppleness of wrist, he will find his wicket disturbed. Ranjitsinhji himself could never have done it in old days when the wickets sometimes shot and often bumped; it is a stroke, in fact, begotten and nurtured on Fenner's and Brighton. Another difference between play-

ing fast bowling and slow, is that fast bowling is far easier to hit behind the wicket on the off-side than slow, as may be seen from the fact that Richardson has, besides the wicket-keep, three fields in the slips at least ; while to slow—Tyler, for instance—two would suffice. As every cricketer knows, players are constantly caught in two minds when playing slow bowling, the result being a compromise frequently attended by disaster. To fast bowling there is no time for two minds ; your first instinct may be a wrong one, but for better for worse it is the first and only instinct.

A good batsman often leaves his ground to slow bowling, and, meeting the ball either full pitch or the second it leaves the ground, pulls it to leg if a full pitch, or drives it if a half volley. In the case of a full pitch a batsman often has the power to place it where there are no fields ; if leg is put square, as he invariably is to slow bowling, he can pull the ball fine out of his reach. Great care, however, is necessary to go out to the

right ball; for if a bowler has any break, and you do not smother the ball, the batsman will be beat by the break, and stumped or bowled. Some bowlers break so much that it is almost true to say you had better go on the safe side and not leave your ground, unless you can be sure of getting the ball full pitch.

To very slow bowlers it therefore follows that the really proper standard of play is to play back, or, going out of your ground, to hit full pitch; but remember one thing, never go out to a ball unless certain of making it a full pitch, that is on the off side, for it is not easy to hit it with a straight bat, since if you miss it you must be stumped. To medium pace bowling some sort of compromise must be adopted between the two methods I have recommended. You cannot go out of your ground to such bowlers; on the other hand, you ought not to play so many balls forward, and you must be very careful to observe the changes of pace. When the wicket is very hard and fast, the

commonest way of getting out is to be caught behind the wicket either by the wicket-keep standing back, or in the slips; and the reason is, that to one sort of bowler it is very easy to hit under the balls you are trying to cut; and to another sort (when the ball comes across at all from leg) batsmen are very apt to play inside it, just turning it thereby into short slip's hands. It is well when you first go in, therefore, to sacrifice some strength at off balls, refraining from making a clean hit, and, instead, to hit on the top of the ball to keep it down.

To score on difficult bowlers' wickets is an art that stands by itself. The men who can do this are the chosen few. Where one man can show scientific cricket on soft, caking grounds, ten at least can be found who can play and hit bowling when the wicket is hard and fast. There are two sorts of players whose methods are entirely different and entirely opposite. The really scientific batsman who plays correct and orthodox cricket, watching every ball with the eye of a

hawk, keeping his left shoulder well forward and thereby getting well over the bumping ball, holding the bat, when occasion demands, loosely—such a bat hardly exists. Of course, putting Grace aside, the only batsmen of the scientific sort whom I have seen rise above difficulties of wicket are Shrewsbury, Barnes, Steel, and Rashleigh; and of these the greatest is Shrewsbury, whose innings of 164, in 1886, against Palmer, Giffen, Garrett, Spofforth, and Evans, was the greatest individual innings on a bowler's wicket that I have ever seen; and ever to be held in honour was Rashleigh's two innings in 1888, when he scored 48 and 37 on a real bowler's wicket against Turner and Ferris just in their prime, and whom he had never seen before.

The other sort of player, who sometimes comes off on difficult wickets, is the bold and fearless hitter; and in this, as in several other ways, we have learnt a lesson from the Australians. In the particular match I have just mentioned, in which Rashleigh played

those two celebrated innings, the opposite method was seen when M'Donnell, though against vastly inferior bowling, scored over 100 by the most fearless, dashing cricket. In the same year M'Donnell's greatest innings was played at Manchester, when, in the last innings, going in first with Bannerman, on a soft wicket against Peate and the crack northern bowlers, he scored 82 out of a total of 86. This innings of M'Donnell, and Shrewsbury's of 164, I consider the two greatest batting feats that this generation has seen on bad wickets, while O'Brien's 148 against Surrey in 1896 ranks high.

In giving a sort of brief summary of batting now, it appears to me that, as may be naturally inferred when so many splendid grounds are provided, batsmen score faster and far more largely than formerly; but not being so accustomed to bad wickets, they do not rise superior to difficulties of pitch so well as our former batsmen. On bad wickets, I think, in their prime, Carpenter, Mitchell, George Parr, Daft, and Hayward, having

been obliged to play grand bowling before the heavy roller and mowing machines were invented, became more proficient than players do now, except the four players mentioned before. Batsmen get demoralised when the wicket plays tricky. They never get hurt now, but I remember Grace on Lords, about 1869, against Freeman and Emmett, getting a tremendous crack on the elbow, and how the crowd cheered when he drove the next ball for six. Big scoring is all very well, but it is not the whole of cricket. I may be wrong, but I think I see a decadence, not because of less skill, but because the old balance has been rudely disturbed. It is not possible to make bowlers good enough to get bats out on hard wickets for reasonable scores, so as to make it possible for matches to be finished always in three days, and tolerably often in two days, such as Fenners, Brighton, and many others.

Of course, Grace is by far the greatest batsman of all time; but no cricketer ought ever to forget that no county has, during the

space of the last fifty years, produced such five mighty bats as Nottingham, in the persons of George Parr, Richard Daft, Arthur Shrewsbury, William Barnes, and William Gunn.

II

BOWLING

To get a side out you require two bowlers at least, one at each end, and nine fields, whose places must be arranged according as the circumstances require. Bowling is the most difficult of the arts of cricket to acquire; indeed, so difficult that of it may almost, though not quite, be said, "*Nascitur, non fit.*" You cannot learn from others, or acquire by practice nearly so much for the improvement of your bowling as for that of your batting. Some bowlers have a natural curl in the air, some a break, some a great spin on the ball; but these are all natural gifts, and I have known many instances of their departing as suddenly and as unaccountably as they came. A bowler can acquire by diligent practice a certain command over

the pace and direction of the ball—great and important characteristics for any bowler—but without the aid of one or the other of the natural gifts no man can hope to be a great bowler. There are other causes of success for bowlers; one of these is action, and one which cannot readily be altered. But, whilst some actions make it easy for batsmen to see the ball, others make it difficult; so that it often happens that though one bowler has more spin, more break, as much accuracy, and, in a word, is a better bowler than another, the other has an action which makes it difficult for the batsman to judge the length of the ball. In the long-run, therefore, though the latter is the worse bowler of the two, he is the more successful one. Left-hand bowlers seem to bowl round the wicket more than do right-hand bowlers; consequently there is no umpire, white-coated or otherwise, in the line of sight, and such are nearly always easy to see. Tall men, like Lohmann and Spofforth, who deliver their balls from a great height, bowl

in such a way that it is difficult to judge the length, and spectators may see this for themselves. Lohmann, for instance, as you sit in the ring, seems to bowl what look like half-volleys and yorkers, but when the batsmen play them you see that before the ball gets to their distance it drops straight down. This sort of ball is very difficult indeed to judge, and was one of the many qualities that made Lohmann the great bowler that he was. W. G. Grace has a long arm, which is extended at full length, and such bowling round the wicket often deceives batsmen in the direction of the ball, which looks as if it was good to hit to leg; the ball, however, being on the leg stump, l.b.w. is the result. Wright, of Kent, has a natural curl in the air, a characteristic very rarely found; and Mr. King, one of the Philadelphian Eleven, has the same; but this much is clear in these days of beautiful smooth wickets — that mere mechanical accuracy of length is not sufficient to get a first-class eleven out, and on this point it

is well to consider the great Australian bowlers, and the disastrous campaign in Australia in 1897-8.

Australian cricket is played on altogether different lines to English; for though the season is longer, yet, communication being difficult, matches are not played every day, as in England, and matches are played to a finish regardless of time. The climate is hot, and the wickets are very hard and easy—speaking of the three chief towns of Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. As a general rule, therefore, to bat is easy, and to bowl difficult. Necessity, however, being the mother of invention, the Australian bowlers turned their heads to account, and the result has been a revolution in the game. The early giants among Australian bowlers were Boyle, Spofforth, and Palmer. Boyle was a slowish bowler, excellent of his class, but not strikingly different from English bowlers of an earlier date—Caffyn, for instance. But Spofforth and Palmer were reckoned fast, and Spofforth was the first of fast bowlers who,

without altering his action, altered his pace ; while Palmer was the first of fast bowlers who had the capacity of making the ball break from leg—his natural break, like Spoforth's, being the usual one from the off. To these two bowlers I think cricketers generally will give the credit of being the pioneers of that great development of the game which may be said to be a recognition of the fact that more than mere dry precision is required to get batsmen out on good wickets. A. G. Steel, who began playing first-class cricket in 1878, Giffen, Lohmann, and many others have successfully adopted the same tactics ; and it may be noted that while in the old days every bowler belonged to a class—fast, medium, or slow—to classify them now is difficult, for many bowlers seem to be able to bowl all three paces. Haigh, the Yorkshireman, seems now to be the best changer of pace without change of action. One thing, however, is obvious, and that is that the invariable slow bowler seems for the present to be extinct, unless Tyler be the

exception. Bennett, Southerton, Buchanan, &c., were all slow, relying on break, length, and judicious placing of the field for their success ; while all the fast bowlers hammered away at the same pace, and, helped by the wickets, were difficult and sometimes dangerous to play.

If I had to train a youngster to bowl, I should first of all practise him to bowl a good length and within his strength. If he had a natural break, I should try and get him to acquire the power of varying his pace, keeping the same action, and, if a very apt pupil, to accustom himself to alter the height of his arm. Attewell has this power to a certain extent, and a very useful gift it is. But I feel convinced (and to prove it you need only look at the high rate of scoring in these days) that the principle of variety must be the essence of the bowling art, as long as these perfect wickets are to be the rule, and the days of mechanical accuracy are past ; and these remarks seem justified by what has happened in Australia,

where Hearne and Richardson have proved to be harmless.

Scoring being on such a gigantic scale, I am tempted to ask what has become of the old-fashioned lob. I fully admit, even with the astonishing success of Humphreys, of Sussex, before me, that it is well not to rely upon a lob bowler as your sheet anchor, but I am convinced that every side would be materially strengthened if a good lob bowler were to be numbered among the eleven. Formerly there were a good many first-rate lob bowlers in England. William Clarke, V. E. Walker, Goodrich, Tinley, Mordaunt, Rose, and Ridley were all first-rate; and many other bowlers were very useful, though not first-rate, in this department—such as Iddison, Mudie, and others. I believe modern batsmen would be found to play the best lobs better than the old players; but still to this day there are many cricketers I could name who seem to me to play lobs worse than they do any other sort of delivery. When a player is well set and going strong,

he is apt to pooh-pooh the idea of lobs being anything but contemptible, and slog and play recklessly at them, either flying out at a short ball and getting stumped, or else getting caught at deep field by a judiciously placed man. But more important still is the effect that lob bowlers have on nervous batsmen, and, as I have said before, all batsmen are nervous when they first go in. If I had a good lob bowler on my side, I should put him on to every new batsman on his first going in; and this procedure was, I believe, adopted by Murdoch in the case of Humphreys with the greatest success.

Lob bowlers cannot break both ways. This, I think, is quite true, and, roughly speaking, they may be divided into two classes—those who, like Ridley, bowl chiefly on the off stump, and break away, and have seven or eight fields on the off side; and those who, like Humphreys, keep on the on side. It may be asked, Why not combine the two styles? The answer is, You can, but if you do you want more than eleven fields:

you do not try and bowl men out, but tempt them to hit, and if you bowl off balls, the batsmen has to get the ball away from eight men—not an easy thing to do; while, if both styles be adopted, you have only four men on each side, and then a lob bowler becomes expensive.

For years past the strength of the professional has been in bowling, but never since I began to watch and take an interest in cricket have I seen amateurs and professionals so nearly equal in this respect as they are now, in 1897. No doubt Richardson is the finest fast bowler; but if you take the first half-dozen from both ranks, the difference is not so great as it used to be. Richardson, Mold, Hearne, Haigh, and Attewell may be the five best professional bowlers, and no doubt they are far ahead of Jessop, Cunliffe, Bull, Woods, and Townsend, but not so far as used to be the case; and though I hope my younger friends who play cricket now will not be offended, I am bound to say that I think

English bowling of all sorts has never been so weak during the past forty years as it is at the present time. I honestly do not think that there is a single really first-class bowler in England at the present day ; but I think, also, that this state of things is not altogether the bowler's fault. We have just passed through a cycle of dry years, and the splendid wickets have broken bowlers' hearts. That is one reason. Another lies in the fact that Richardson, who in 1895 could safely be reckoned with Jackson and Freeman as constituting the three finest fast bowlers the world has ever seen, has since that time had too much bowling ; and personally, I do not believe that any bowler, however powerfully made, can last long with such an amount of work as that Richardson has had to do. In 1895, in first-class matches alone, for the most part on hard wickets, he bowled 1690 overs, while in Australia the winter following he bowled 618, and in the summer following, in England, he bowled 1656 more, these overs being of five balls. He was pretty nearly

a fixture at the end for Surrey, and whenever he played against the Australians. Just to compare a season's work in former days, I take a casual year, 1871, and I find that only two bowlers bowled over 6000 balls in a season, and they were both slow—Shaw and Southerton—and 1200 balls made a fair season's work for fast bowlers; while Richardson, with only two breaks of six weeks for the voyage to and from Australia, between May 1895 and September 1896, bowled 19,820 balls, quite apart from any scratch match and balls at practice, and all this at a great pace and with a long run. I do not believe any but slow and medium-pace bowlers can stand this, and grand bowler though Richardson was in 1896, he was better in 1895. As he has gone out to Australia again this winter, and has had to bowl in an abnormally hot season on the losing side, I feel very sure that he will never be the great bowler that he once was, and he is only twenty-eight this year. Too much bowling, then, on the one hand, and

glorious wickets on the other, have, I think, rather knocked the bowlers' hearts to pieces. We have had a cycle of dry years; matches run into three days; the prominent cricketers have often to travel all or part of a night to begin another three days' match. It is too much for them, and if bowlers of a former generation had had this amount of work to do, they could not have lasted in the way they did. But two or three wet seasons, like 1888 and 1890, would bring about a very different state of things.

I am no *laudator temporis acti*. I believe that, given the same wickets, our bowlers would be able to prove themselves every bit as good as the giants of old; and in one particular there can be no doubt that bowlers of the present day are far superior to those of the former generations, and that is in accuracy. To take one illustration, no bowler bowls a ball to leg now. The batsman, if he wants to hit in that direction, must pull a straight ball. This might have been the case with the old slow bowlers,

but it certainly never was with the fast ones. One of the earliest matches I ever saw was Gentlemen and Players, in 1866. Grundy, notoriously one of the straightest bowlers in England, medium pace, right hand, was bowling to A. H. Winter, who hit him three or four times to leg in two overs, and this was leg-hitting of the orthodox type, being hit off balls bowled to leg, and not pulled. George Parr was famous for his leg-hitting, so also was Mr. Mitchell, and later still Oscroft; but who can be said to be the best leg-hitter now? No Parr or Mitchell is possible in these days, when the accuracy of the bowlers has driven leg-hitting out of cricket.

The greatest fast bowlers of the years between 1860 and 1875 were Jackson, Tarrant, Freeman, Atkinson, and Willsher; and of these Willsher lasted much the longest, and was always a grand bowler. But there were a great number of magnificent fast bowlers during those years. J. C. Shaw, Wootton, Emmett, Howitt, Griffith, and a host of

others were all high-class bowlers, but of first-class slow bowlers there were not so many. Alfred Shaw began a medium fast bowler and finished a slow ; and Southerton, Bennett, Arkwright, and Plowden were four famous names as slow bowlers. Richardson in these days is worthy, judging by his past feats, of being reckoned with the best. Peate, of Yorkshire, was the best length bowler I ever saw ; but taking all wickets and all conditions, I regard Spofforth as the best bowler that ever lived, and Lohmann the second.

III

FIELDING

IF there is one department of cricket where it may be doubted whether there has been any material progress made as compared with days gone by, I should say fielding is that one, and it ought to be better on the whole. Of course, it is altered in its character. Long-stops are not now required; long-leg is a thing of the past. If the bowling is of Richardson's pace, the wicket-keeper stands back, more men are placed in the slips, and, generally, I should say that, with the exception of the wicket-keep, short-slip has more catches than any other "field." Still, though it is not easy to compare past generations with this, I am of the opinion that more catches are missed than ought to be, and more care and attention should be

bestowed upon this part of the game. It may be stated, as a more or less true axiom, that good fielding makes weak bowling strong; and if no feasible catches were dropped, very rarely would innings of 300 runs be seen. What visions of dropped catches pass through my mind as I look back over thirty years' experience of cricket—a chapter might be written on them—and how many old cricketers live, deep in whose hearts linger bitter memories of catches in the hands and out again. True, some men have hands that are not well adapted for holding catches. A small, fat, fleshy hand is one out of which the ball is apt to bound—it lacks grip and holding power—but even such hands, if the owners thereof would only hold them in the right position, would hold catches and not drop them. Some fields can hold catches however they come in reason, and, within limits, however they hold their hands; but I feel sure that boys ought to be taught, in high catches, to hold the two hands high up, even close to the face,

like Herbert Marshall, an old Cambridge cricketer, used to do. Many a match have I played with him, and never can I call to mind any ball leaving his hands when once it got into them, and his hands were not by any means what you would call well shaped for catching. Many fielders hold their hands away from them, when it follows that the eye must be out of line with the ball, and this is a style which inspires no confidence in the mind of the spectator.

More training and care ought to be given to fielding and catching, for it must be remembered that, with the beautifully smooth wickets of these days, to miss catches is far more damaging to the chances of success than formerly, when the less easy wickets caused far more batsmen to be bowled than now.

To fast bowling in former days the method of arrangement of the fields consisted almost invariably of wicket-keep, long-stop, short-slip, long-slip, point, cover-point, mid-off, long-on, short-leg, and long-leg; and if any change was made from this, it

was that mid-on came round, and short-leg went third man. Nearly every match was played with the field placed as I have stated, and there were certain unwritten laws which were very faithfully observed. For instance, long-leg to one bowler used always to field cover-point to the other. It was always assumed that every bowler should be a born short-slip to the other bowler, and it was considered high treason that your chief bowlers should be put anywhere where they would be expected to throw, for fear of injuring their arm; this, I imagine, was the reason why they so frequently took short-slip. But the chief difference in the fielding between those days and these is the result of boundaries. Everything was run out, so throwing from long distances became absolutely necessary, and moreover very beautiful to look at; in fact, nothing prettier in cricket could be seen than a low, skimming, long hop, thrown in from eighty yards off, neatly handled by the wicket-keeper, the bails knocked off with no fuss, and the bats-

man run out by inches. Jack Smith, of Cambridge, W. Bury, H. M. Marshall, Daniel, of Cambridge University, and, at a later date, W. H. Game, for Oxford, were splendid specimens of long-leg fieldsmen. Game, notwithstanding that he played in the days of boundaries, was, to my mind, the finest thrower that ever lived. The old principle that you should run for the throw was not acted up to when Game had the ball in his hands near the ropes, and he was a grand catch too. The practical abolition of leg-hitting, by the wonderful accuracy of modern bowling, has robbed the game of no small amount of its æsthetic enjoyment, for, in the first place, a leg-hit is a lovely stroke to witness, as is a catch against the ropes, and lastly, prettier than any was the good throw-in.

To slow bowling in old days long-stop and long-slip were put out deep, one on the off side, the other on the on; long-leg was put square with the wicket, the chief difference being that, as compared with now, mid-on

covers mid-on and short-leg, and an extra field is put between mid-off and cover. But how different is the whole method of fielding in these days! A bowler fields anywhere now except wicket-keep and in the deep field, while short-slip being, with the exception of wicket-keep, the most important man in the field (at any rate to fast bowling), fields there both ends; and so important is the fielding in the slips generally that a modern innovation has been found in the shape of a short-slip, the popular name for which is cover-slip, where Lohmann has covered himself with glory. He stands sometimes so close to short-slip that they may almost shake hands. The bowler fields wherever he is most at home; while some of the most brilliant fielding in modern times has been shown by the extra mid-off, with which the name of G. B. Studd will ever be associated. There is far more elasticity in the whole arrangement; if an off-hitter like Palairet is batting, third man is put back against the ropes to save the fours. One

often sees two different men fielding cover-point, one to each bowler ; but most marvellous of all is the sight of the modern wicket-keep standing up to fast bowling with no long-stop, a very striking instance of the excellence of the wickets and the accuracy of the bowling. It could not have been done in old days, because the shooter that missed bat and wicket must have gone for four or more byes, and so would the bumping ball. Still, it is a testimony to the wonderful skill of the modern wicket-keep, for it throws great responsibility upon him. The Australians started the innovation with Blackham, and at once struck the world of cricket with wonder, respect, and amazement. It must be remembered, however, that for this change almost as much credit is due to the bowler as the wicket-keep ; and if anybody would like to try the experiment of standing up to the wicket while Mold was bowling, he would be astonished to find how small a proportion of balls pass the wicket at all. The few balls that pass

the bat generally hit the wicket, and catching is the important point.

The arrangement of the field is not really very difficult to a man of intelligence who takes the trouble to watch the play. First-class cricketers play together in rather a select circle—in fact, everybody knows about everybody. When Jessop and O'Brien come in you must have two fields out deep; if Palairt, a field out deep on the off side; if Jackson, an active man must be on the on side, and so on. If the wicket is hard and inclined to bump, impress upon short-slip that his post is no sinecure, and rebuke any field who keeps his hands in his pockets and apparently takes no interest in the game. If a fieldsman, young probably, impetuous certainly, is seen to rush in and charge a ball, a captain should exercise a chastening and moderating demeanour upon him; and a good word of advice to bowlers is, that they should be careful not to begin their over until the fields are in their places and ready. If hitters are in, and the field is

getting demoralised, don't hurry; take time, and put your sure catches out deep.

Cricketers are fond of saying that the highest faculties of the brain are necessary to enable anybody to become really great; and though it may appear to the ignorant that all that is required of a field is that he should be sharp and alert, in reality a judge of the game can detect stupidity in a field as easily as in a batsman or bowler. One sort of field there is who never seems to watch the play, or if he does, he can draw no inferences therefrom. He is put in a certain place, and then he stands glued to the spot as if he had taken root. This may be exactly right to one sort of bat, but is certainly not so to another, and he ought to be able to discover this for himself by observing the batsman's style. Another common form of stupidity is that when the batsmen become confused in running, the field often never thinks, but hurls the ball in wrong end, and the chance of a "run out" is thrown away. There are many other little

ways in which a man of intelligence may be detected at once.

In no department of the game has there been a more wonderful advance than in amateur wicket-keeping. Thirty years ago the disparity between professionals and amateurs in this respect was as great as it was in the case of bowling. Lockyer, Pooley, Plumb, Pinder, and Philips were streets ahead of the gentlemen. These might be represented by Bush, Winter, Haygarth, Round, and Bissett. In these days Storer, Lilley, and Hunter are probably only a little better than Newton, M'Gregor, and Philipson; and the past ten years has seen such amateur giants as Alfred Lyttelton, Tylecote, Wickham, Kemble, Gay, Lewis, and Leatham, in addition to the above-named. Professionals are as good. One need only mention D. Hunter, C. Smith, Sherwin, Pilling, Board, Pike, Butt, and Huish, besides the great three. Still there is little to choose, and I confess that I cannot give a sound reason to explain the change, and the fact is a curious one.

I may attach too much importance to the æsthetic side of cricket, but nobody can deny that really good fielding is a lovely thing to see. The quiet, neat field, with a low, easy return, like the Rev. W. Law, Royle, and A. Bannerman, is a mixture of skill and grace that makes fielding, along with batting and bowling, the æsthetic treat that any game to be called great must have. I have discussed wicket-keeping; but if you want to teach a youth to keep well, you must first of all instil into his mind the cardinal principle that both feet must be kept still; and next, that, as there are at least three times more catching chances given than stumping, this must be first of all attended to. So do not let him play to the gallery by laying himself out to stumping off leg balls, for three catches out of four are on the off side, or just over the wicket. Let the fieldmen also remember that the man who is keeping wicket stands more chance of getting his hands bruised than all the rest of the field put together, so don't throw in hard unless there is good reason.

I have stated that long-leg and long-stop are things of the past, so all that need be said about them is that, in the days when the demand for these fields existed, the supply was plentiful and excellent. Jack Smith, of Cambridgeshire, Daft, Bury, Daniel, and Game were all magnificent at long-leg, as also were Rowbotham, Mortlock, Jupp, and Herbert Marshall at that most thankless of all posts, long-stop. To take another post, viz., point, every fielder there should be quick, able to catch with either hand, and not afraid of facing a real hot one. As the late Mr. Fitzgerald said, if you have no particular star to place at point, choose the fattest man, because nature often compels him to stop a hot one by depriving him of agility sufficient to enable him to get out of the way. The earliest hero in this place was R. T. King, of Cambridge University, whom the late Mr. John Walker, an excellent judge, thought the best he had ever seen. Carpenter, Tinley, V. E. Walker, E. M. Grace, and F. W. Wright were all first-rate here, as is Brown, of Yorkshire, at the

present time. By universal consent, cover-point, mid-off, extra-cover, and third man are the three posts where ground fielding is all-important; they get catches, often very warm ones, but on these four men lies the responsibility of stopping, if possible, all the cuts and off-drives, the commonest and hardest of hits; and nobody who has seen Law, Royle, G. B. Studd, Hemingway, Briggs, and Strachan at one or other of these posts will ever forget any of them.

The fields at short-slip and extra short-slip should, on the other hand, be sure catches. They have no opportunity for ground fielding, like cover-point, but they get more catches than any other field except wicket-keep; and at the present day on hard wickets it seems hardly possible to get a good side out unless you have a sure hand in the slips. If anybody who has been accustomed to keeping wicket wants a variety, let him take short-slip. He will get a great deal of the fun and none of the bruises of wicket-keeping. But the catches may come low or

high, either to the right hand or to the left, and most of them very quick. From this it is easy to see that a field, to really excel here, must have peculiar gifts coupled with the faculty of stooping with quickness; so youth, in this as in other departments, must have its day. Tunncliffe, of Yorkshire, is a splendid short-slip; but the best I have ever seen was the renowned Lohmann, who has brought off more fine catches here than anybody else in the history of cricket.

Lastly, in these days of wickets so smooth and good that bowlers' hearts are getting broken, let my former axiom be remembered—that good fielding makes weak bowling strong, that the smooth ground which kills the bowlers makes fielding easier, and if you do not want to spend nearly all of your cricketing time in fielding out, practise catching in season and out of season, for if an eleven only hold catches, it would astonish you to see how few matches they lose.

IV

GENTLEMEN AND PLAYERS

THE two designations, Gentlemen and Players, ought to need no description or definition, but as a matter of fact they do. A gentleman we should naturally understand to be a man who plays the game for the love of it, receiving neither fee, reward, nor expenses. If he played for a county he would try and play as often as he could, partly for keenness of the game, partly from a patriotic desire to do his county a good turn. He would play for the enjoyment of the thing, would not care for his average, would follow no table of statistics, and, if an old University man, would refuse to play anywhere on the day of the University match.

The professional, on the other hand, having to make his living by the game, would wish

to succeed, not only because he loved the game, but also because he wished to keep his place in the county eleven, to be chosen, perhaps, for the great ten-guinea match, and, generally, because to be successful from a pecuniary point of view it is necessary to succeed as a cricketer also. If a professional does not belong to a tolerably well-known county eleven, it is almost absolutely essential that he should be a bowler, for an engagement to a school is not to be got unless the professional can bowl. To be incapacitated and unable to play, means, to the professional, loss of income. He does not like to be hit over the fingers, and if he is wise he will lead a temperate and steady life. And to his credit it must be said that the professional of to-day is far better in that respect than his predecessor, and, speaking generally, he plays the game like a professional and not like a gentleman. I do not mean that in an unpleasant sense, but the professional bat will play steadier, and will most likely not have so attractive a style.

I have briefly described the natural and perhaps ideal definition of what the gentleman and the player should be; but the development of the game has brought about a great change in the respective positions, some of which are inevitable and not altogether for the worse, while others, I think, are both bad for the individual and for the game. Money in this, as in most other departments of life, is the root of all the mischief. A county to earn gate-money must win matches. To win matches they must have first-rate players, and if these players are not reared and trained in the county, they must be bought from outside. The amateur who plays for his county has so much pressure put upon him to play by the committee, for fear of losing a match without him, that he is almost forced to accede to the request, and, as a consequence, unless he is possessed of considerable private means, he must receive expenses. What is received by one amateur must for obvious reasons be received by all; and thus an amateur,

having to live up to his position, receives as much for his expenses as a professional for expenses and salary. This state of things does not seem exactly in harmony with old-fashioned views of what an amateur should be; but for my part I think, for county matches at any rate, that it is an unavoidable evil. But every element of public opinion ought to condemn any payment except for county matches, and perhaps University matches away from home. Personally, I dislike tabulated statements of number of points, percentages, and all those complicated tables and calculations, and the name of champion county, but this is an age when such things seem a necessity. We must all be lowering a record, and the consequence is, that the competition among counties has lately become one of the fiercest and keenest struggles in cricket. No county can afford to lose a man, and if England and Australia play an international match, the date of the match is regulated so that no first-class county match shall clash with this important

fixture. If this is the spirit of county cricket, it will at once be seen that an amateur, who may be keen to play as an amateur, is placed in a difficult position. He may be well off and not in the least desirous of having his expenses paid, but in the same county is often found another amateur whose services are equally indispensable, but who cannot afford to travel a hundred miles and incur hotel expenses; and what in such cases can a county committee do? It can either dispense altogether with the poor amateur's services, in which case the county loses a good man and very likely the match, or his expenses must be paid. The committee, in these days of fierce rivalry, will take the latter course, and it follows that the rich amateur must get his expenses paid also. The one amateur may be poor, but he is a gentleman with proper pride, and he will not for an instant tolerate a position which makes such an invidious distinction between him and his richer colleague; and thus is brought about the state of things, that in county

matches all amateurs are paid their expenses. Up to this point I am reluctantly, I admit, forced to the conclusion that expenses must be paid; and I also think that for a Colonial tour, and for foreign University matches, expenses must also be paid to amateurs. It is no good taking a bad eleven to Australia, and only a casual amateur can go there at his own expense; while in foreign University matches, there are many undergraduates who cannot afford to play away from their University, and as these matches must be played, so must the players get their expenses.

It is, however, notorious that there are several men playing as amateurs who have gone far beyond these limits, and for my part I think that all amateur cricketers and *bonâ fide* professionals have good reason to protest against such a system. Why should one amateur get a large fee for expenses to play in the great matches—*Gentlemen v. Players* for instance? His proper pride ought to debar him from accepting any sum for a match with such a title. Why should

another amateur receive a lump sum at the end of the season, which appears in the audited accounts as "bonus to Mr. So-and-so"? Why should any amateur have a benefit match exactly the same as a professional, except that in the latter case it is called a "benefit," in the former a "complimentary" match, the whole balance of the gate-money in each case being handed over to the *bénéficiaire*? This sort of thing has gone on so long that I suppose some consideration must be shown for vested interests, but I earnestly hope that in no new instance shall we see such things recur. I hold no brief for the professionals, but I cannot see why the Australians, who are all professionals, should walk into the chief rooms of the pavilion and be banqueted at the expense of the Marylebone Club, while the English professional is condemned to take the lower room. We have actually seen during this year's visit of Stoddart's Eleven to Australia, a prominent Australian cricketer refuse to play in the test matches because he was not

sufficiently paid, and it transpired that £150 was the sum paid to sundry players for five matches. The Australians have, man for man, made far more money in England than our English professionals have in Australia; and from a social point of view both should be treated alike—with hospitality and welcome—but alike. The proper ideal is that there ought to be two, and only two classes—Gentlemen and Players—with no hybrid mixture of the two.

There is one other point of view in which the modern system of gate-money, champion county, &c., has been productive of much evil, viz., that everything goes to the county which has the longest purse, so as to cause a jumbling up of counties that is positively bewildering. A rich county like Surrey or Lancashire scour the country and buy cricketers whom their poorer neighbours cannot afford to keep; and a professional, having to earn his living, is only too glad to be bought by a first-class county to play first-class cricket, and, if lucky, to get a good

benefit. All committees practise this except Yorkshire, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, and one cannot help having an honourable regard for these three counties in consequence. The queer thing about the whole matter is, that a crowd like the Surrey crowd, who grow so frantically keen during the progress of a county match, is seen to be just as keen for their county to win, composed as the eleven often has been of men purchased from all parts of England, and having no connection with Surrey by birth, as Yorkshire, Notts, and Derbyshire are for the success of their genuine natives. In this connection, Surrey would have been nothing if it were not for Lohmann, born in Middlesex, Lockwood and Sharpe in Notts, Beaumont in Yorkshire, Hayward in Cambridge, Henderson in Monmouth, Wood in Kent, Baldwin in Suffolk, Lees in Yorkshire, and several more; while Sussex, in their county eleven, have men from Notts, Staffordshire, Australia, and India. The modern professional, therefore, plays for his county if the committee, in the

first instance, discover him, and, in the next, have the money to keep him ; if they have not he is open to the highest bidder. The objection to this is the same as in the case of the League Association football—the rich counties despoil the poorer of all their promising players, and filthy lucre rules the day.

The annual match at Lords between the Gentlemen and Players is the great match of the year. Speaking for myself, it shares with the University match the chief honour for genuine play, and both matches have the stamp of antiquity and historical interest on them. The Gentlemen and Players match practically has been played ever since cricket began, the first match having been played in 1806. There have been variations in odds, owing to the greater strength of the Players, but this will never occur again, and the struggle has for years been worthy of the name. In old times, and, indeed, till recently, a certain style was characteristic of each team: the amateurs batted in more attractive if less safe style than the profes-

sionals. They played a fast, forward, driving game, and though both used to cut, this stroke seemed more favoured among the Players than among the amateurs. Grace, of course, is left out of the question. At the present moment, however, the difference in style is not so obvious. Hayward, for instance, plays in real amateur fashion, so do Tunnicliffe and Baker. So many matches are played now that the Oval match has lost much of its interest, owing to the fact that it is difficult to get a decent eleven for the amateurs; and it is to be hoped that this match will be discontinued sooner than be played as it is now.

In bowling the Players have always had a great advantage. In very early days the Gentlemen used often to take one or two of the best professionals to make the match more even, but even then the Players nearly always won. It was not till 1843 that the Gentlemen scored a one-innings victory; while between 1822 and 1842 they did not bring off a single win, though they had some

odds more than once. These two victories in 1842 and 1843 were largely the work of the famous Alfred Mynn, perhaps the best bowler the Gentlemen have had. Alfred Mynn was a hero—a huge man, a hard hitter, famous in single-wicket matches, a lover of the game, and the idol of Kent. History repeats itself. Mynn was a gentleman farmer, and, like several others of that profession, lost his money, was frequently in debt, and used to go to prison, according to the law of those days. When a great match came to be played, his debts used to be somehow liquidated, and his release generally was timed so that his presence in the match was assured.

In 1846 William Clarke, the famous lob bowler, aged forty-seven, and George Parr, aged twenty, played for the Players, both for the first time. Slow bowlers can bowl to a greater age than fast. At the present day, except W. G. Grace, no cricketer so old as forty-seven plays first-class cricket. Both Clarke and Parr were Nottingham men, and

Clarke had played for thirty years before he played in this great match. The great Lillywhite, when he was fifty-three, took 12 wickets for 96 runs—which, it is safe to assume, will never be done again. George Parr seems to me, judging by his scores, to have been from 1853 to 1863 the best and certainly the most consistent bat in England; and during that time the Gentlemen never secured one victory, though in 1857 was played a famous match wherein Reginald Hankey played an historical innings of 70. So grand was this innings that it still survives in the memory of those who saw it as one of the great innings of the century. The Players were very strong during the period from 1850 to 1864—Parr, Hayward, Carpenter, Daft, and Caffyn being the most notable bats, with Wisden, Jackson, Willsher, and Wootton prominent as bowlers. But about the year 1865 there was a schism in the professional ranks. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to say that many northern players refused to play, and the

professionals for several years could not play their best eleven. This was one, but not the main cause why after 1864 the Gentlemen had a great run of success. In 1865 the Gentlemen won at Lords for the first time since 1853; George Parr played his last and Grace his first match, and a revolution in cricket began. The Players for some reason began to fall off greatly in batting; but Grace was the mainspring of the strength of the amateurs, and in these matches he established records that will never be equalled. At Lords there have been, since 1850, twenty centuries obtained, and of these Grace has made seven. At the Oval, out of seventeen centuries, Grace has made four, while on other grounds Grace has made four out of nine hundreds. Up to 1874, taking Lords and the Oval, the Players lost twelve matches in succession, mainly owing to Grace.

I have briefly touched upon these matches, and it is to be hoped that in future one match a year will be played, and that on Lords, as the still old and historical ground.

The Players rightly get paid higher for this match than for any other, and everything ought to be done to make it the goal of every cricketer's ambition to be selected. There has been a levelling up in the two sides. In former years, though grand cricket was shown, up to 1865 the Players were too strong; between 1865 and 1877 the boot was on the other leg; and in batting, bowling, and wicket-keeping, the two sides are now more even than they have ever been before, though, of course, in bowling the amateurs are weaker. But it is a match too good to have more than once a year, and it seems to be the only game where amateurs and professionals can meet on even terms with no social vexations and troubles.

V

THE AUSTRALIANS

SINCE 1876, when in Australia a picked Australian eleven for the first time defeated an English team on level terms, the interest of all who follow the game has been fastened on Australia and its cricket methods. The Americans play, and fairly well; the South Africans the same, though they are for the most part English-born, who have learnt their cricket in England; there is cricket in the West Indies, India, and New Zealand; but it is impossible in this chapter to devote any space to these beyond expressing a most hearty welcome to the various elevens who visit our shores. Australian cricket, however, has been so interesting, and has had such an important bearing on the whole game, that it is well to examine into its history and development.

When, in the early sixties, George Parr and H. H. Stephenson took out two elevens to Australia, they always played against odds; and, in fact, the style of Australian cricket in those days was of a very similar type to that encountered by the old All England and United Elevens in their tours about Great Britain, when they used to play against local twenty-two's, who were as a rule fortified by two good professional bowlers, such as Hodgson and Slinn.

But the first-rate English batting, bowling, and fielding shown by the two teams taken out by Parr and Stephenson must have had an enormous effect on Australian cricket; for between 1864 and 1873 (in which latter year W. G. Grace took out a fair but not first-rate lot) Australian cricket had improved to a large extent. But even Grace's eleven never contended on even terms with the Australians, although they did not always play against twenty-two opponents, and they were beaten on three occasions. Grace's eleven was not by any means first-class: it

included men like Boulton, W. R. Gilbert, Bush, Andrew Greenwood, and Richard Humphrey, who would not have been included in any representative eleven; and it was not till three years later, when a strong professional eleven went out, that the really genuine Australian cricketer was found to have developed far enough to play an English eleven on even terms—and to defeat them. Any one who saw the Colonists play as Lillywhite's team did, knew that for all practical purposes they had, on smooth wickets, a splendid forcing bat in Charles Bannerman, and several bowlers quite in the first rank—Spofforth, Boyle, Kendall, and Evans. Still, so slow, and perhaps I may add, so unwilling, were the Britishers to dream that any eleven outside England could be compared with a really representative English team, that when Gregory's eleven came to England, few anticipated anything but easy victories over the Colonists, and they sat all the more easy when Notts won the first match in the innings, before our visitors had lost their sea-

legs. But Lords told another tale, and a strong M.C.C. eleven, on the 27th May 1878, met bowlers and a field of a style unlike what had been seen before—novel, unexpected, and full of genius. The wickets in those days were not quite as good as they are now, but still the question a long-headed cricketer asked himself after playing the Australians was, "What is there in their bowling which makes it unlike any other I have seen?" It was Spofforth who made a new epoch in the history of cricket, for he it was who first showed us a bowler able to bowl the fastest pace one ball, and then, with no apparent change of style or action, a slower ball, both with amazing accuracy, and frequently with fatal results to the batsman. If any bowler in the world studied and made a science of his work, it was Spofforth. He knew where his field ought to be placed; he thought last thing at night of bowling, and had an idea for every ball, a plan of campaign for every batsman. Though his pace, as a general rule, was so fast, it was so

accurate that the astonished English public saw a wicket-keeper standing up to the wicket with no long-stop, and for a time English batsmen were in a sort of panic when they played him. It is true that the year was wettish, but Grace was in his prime, or nearly so, and yet he could not in that year be said to have proved himself Spofforth's master. There were Allan, Boyle, Garrett, and Midwinter to help Spofforth, and a rare good bowling lot they were; whilst in fielding there was no eleven in England that could surpass or even equal them. The field knew their bowlers and believed in them; Blackham as a wicket-keep was marvellous; and the eleven, with the keenness inseparable from a first visit, threw themselves heart and soul into the whole season's cricket, with the result that only three matches were lost.

Much has been said of the bowling and fielding of this first Colonial team: how can the batting be described? There was Charles Bannerman, a grand hitter, and with good,

or, at any rate, fair defence, but apart from him there was no good bat in the eleven. The batting was rough, far from correct, very unscientific : several of the eleven—Murdoch, and, in a lesser degree, Horan—showed symptoms of developing into sound bats, but that was all. The experience gained in England no doubt made Murdoch what he afterwards became ; and, speaking generally, it may be said that as England learnt a big lesson from Australia in bowling, Australia was equally indebted to England for their subsequent success in batting. Charles Bannerman was a natural bat of the first order, but Murdoch was perhaps the first and the best of the Australian batsmen, and was the forerunner of many others, who, I think, owed their success largely to the sort of stamp they got through Murdoch from English batsmen. But another great fact was early recognised in Australian cricket, whether by accident or design I do not know, and that was the undoubted advantage of hitting.

Possibly Charles Bannerman taught them

this, but till the eleven of 1896 every Australian representative eleven has had one or more big hitters in their ranks. Bannerman himself, Bonnor, M'Donnell, Massie, Lyons, have as hitters never been surpassed in England; and in any matches, especially those played on soft, difficult wickets, the value of a big hitter is difficult to over-estimate. The match is never won for the outside till the last big hitter is out, for he may turn the tide. Massie's hitting, as well as Spofforth's bowling, won the celebrated match at the Oval in 1882, and Lyons' great innings against the M.C.C. in 1893 saved that match also.

The two greatest teams from Australia were those of 1882 and 1884, and though the first is generally assumed to have been the best, my own opinion is that there was little if anything to choose between them. They consisted largely of the same players, but Scott was in the 1884 eleven, and was a better batsman than Horan, and Midwinter played instead of Garrett as a bowler. Both

of these elevens were first-class, perhaps as good working elevens as the world has ever seen. Murdoch, M'Donnell, Scott, Giffen, Bonnor, Horan, and Massie were six batsmen in whom was mingled science, soundness, and daring hitting, a most dangerous combination, as every bowler knows; in bowling there were Spofforth, Boyle, Palmer, Giffen, Garrett, and Midwinter, and in this respect I believe the first four have never been surpassed or even quite equalled; and the wicket-keeping and fielding was quite first-rate.

These two elevens were the high-water mark of Australian cricket; none of the subsequent teams have come up to them. The 1896 eleven was a sound and excellent one; those of 1886, 1888, 1890, and 1893 were far inferior. Of course, in their own country, where England has never been able to send her very best eleven, the two elevens have played very evenly; and the struggle is by no means over yet, as there are no signs that visits will not be interchanged for many years to come.

The first notable struggles between Stoddart's eleven and Australia in 1895 and 1896 possessed an historic interest, and perhaps the success of the Englishmen by three victories to two away from their own country, having lost the toss four matches out of the five, is as good a specimen of English pluck and skill as is to be found in the history of the game. Some luck there was no doubt, the first match having been won entirely owing to a break in the weather; but in the fourth match the English eleven had in this respect far the worst of the luck. But the great feats were in the first and last matches—the first, after the Australians had scored 586 in the first innings of the match; and the last, when they had made 414 in the first innings; and the Englishmen, having to get 298 to win, got them for the loss of four wickets. Looking at the whole series of matches from the point of view of an old critic, I may ascribe some of the English success to the extraordinary captaincy of Giffen, who seemed to think that he ought

to bowl the whole time, the only change necessary being for him to change his end.

To select an eleven is always hard, and it is of momentous importance when you visit a far country; but it appears very strange to me that the Australians only played Hugh Trumble in one of these five test matches, when in 1896, in England, he proved himself to be, on the whole, except perhaps Richardson, the best bowler in the world. Trumble, in 1896, was irresistible on soft wickets, and had the power of making the ball turn on hard wickets (an invaluable quality). His bowling during that year was of a class that quite entitled him to a link in that glorious chain of bowlers consisting of Spofforth, Boyle, Palmer, Giffen, Allan, Garrett, Turner, Ferris, and Trumble.

I have already said, in the chapter on bowling, that on the modern true wickets plain accuracy is not sufficient to get batsmen out. I have never seen, with perhaps the exception of Peate, a better length bowler than Jack Hearne, and when the wicket is not of

the easiest he has a good break and becomes very deadly ; but you see batsmen, some of them not by any means first-rate, merely playing straight forward, and Hearne becomes easy. To get your opponents out on a hard wicket, you must sacrifice some accuracy to obtain turn and twist, and change of pace. Spofforth had both, especially the last ; Palmer, Giffen, Turner, and Trumble had the first. This is the great lesson Englishmen have learnt from the Australians, who learnt it for themselves, because in Australia the wickets are more fast and true than they are in England, even in a hot summer. Some few bowlers have break naturally—Richardson has, and Lockwood had ; but change of pace cannot be natural, it must be acquired by practice. Spofforth had some break, but he must have acquired his wonderful command of pace by long and diligent practice. To possess either or both of these qualities is to make a man a great bowler, but it is so difficult an art that—with grief I say it—I see no small danger of the ruining of

cricket in consequence of the preponderance of the bat. In Australia, where they have many months' play, but fewer matches, they can play all important matches to a finish, and the number of runs is far too great for the interest of the game. But it is probably owing to these wickets that Australia possesses the bowling qualities that have made her great; and now that we have apparently struck upon a vein of dry season, Englishmen must copy the old Australian giants, Spofforth, Palmer, and Turner, and learn to practise those two gifts—break, and variation of pace.

What has caused the difference I hardly know, unless it is that in former days in Australia they did not play over three days, but the tendency of modern Australian batting has been to become slow and steady, to the sacrifice of hitting. This is possibly to make a stronger side for good, hard wickets; but on soft wickets, like those of 1888 and 1890, it is a great mistake to have no hitters. The change is probably

owing to the fact that as time is unlimited for the big Australian matches, which are played to a finish, each man can play his own game. Such a game certainly pays in an English season like 1896, when the hot weather gave a series of hard wickets. On such wickets, especially if you happen to win the toss, a batting eleven like the Australian eleven of that year is very hard to beat.

As may be seen, on looking back over the twenty years since the first Australian eleven came to England, the great Colonial bowlers have had their happy days in England, where the weather is more variable in the long-run, rather than in their own country. Spofforth would not have attained the enviable position of the greatest bowler in the world on his bowling in Australia alone, where it is said that Turner and Palmer were thought as good. It was on English wickets that he earned undying fame. In his early cricket days the Australian batting was nothing like what it has since become ; but against Englishmen in their own country nobody has ever

approached his great feats in 1878, 1880, 1882, and 1884. The modern Australian bowler has horrified the old school, who used with justice to complain of the unfair delivery of Crossland and others, for two of the 1896 eleven bowled with no doubt unfair deliveries; in fact, the Australians began to throw when the vice was stamped out in England. But whatever may happen in the future, there can be no doubt that reciprocity was established between the two countries: England learned much from the Australians in bowling and fielding, and Australia learnt much from England in batting.

In 1897 Stoddart took out a team to Australia that Englishmen were content to believe was the best that ever visited Australia. Richardson was included, and, with the exception of Abel and Gunn, and perhaps one other alteration in October 1897, Englishmen were confident that an eleven had been sent out which would defeat the best Australian eleven. There has been a rude awakening: out of five test matches, Australia has easily won

four. England won the toss in the first match and won ; in the next three Australia won the toss and the three matches. In the final match England again won the toss, but lost the match, and the sad fact remains that the best English bowling, accurate and good as it was, gave the Australians no trouble whatever, while the more dodgy Australian bowling—Noble, Howell, Jones, and Trumble—has proved far away in advance of ours. England has been beaten hip and thigh ; and though we feel humiliated, we must heartily congratulate the Australians, and take the lesson to heart, and realise the fact that on true wickets we must have bowlers of the Lohmann stamp, who are up to dodges, and bowl with the head, with change of pace, twist and spin.

VI

CAPTAINCY—UMPIRING—CRICKET REFORM

CAPTAINCY

To be captain, to preside over the destinies of your side, to put your men in to bat in right order, to change the bowling, to put the bowlers on at the right end, to know when to declare the innings at an end, to judge accurately of your own powers, when to go on to bowl yourself and when to take yourself off, whether to go in or not after winning the toss, to place your field with judgment—to be able to do all these things makes a formidable demand upon the brains and nerves of a man. Besides all these, then there is the indefinable something which goes to making your own eleven trust you: the

taking things coolly—an easy enough task when things are going well, but very difficult when, for instance, a Jessop is making runs at the rate of two a minute, mis-hits going everywhere except to hand; and place the field how you will, luck is all in favour of the hitter, and you know your best bowler is obeying his fallen nature, and is unmistakably losing his pluck;—under these circumstances the ideal captain has to wear a calm face. All the while a serpent is preying on his vitals, and he is conscious of critics in the pavilion and round the ground, a few of whom understand the game, whilst many do not—no wonder there are many men who play to enjoy the game, and are happy when not captain. I wish the learned critics could be got to understand that the captain in the field looks at the game from a closer point of view than they do; that it is probable that no two real judges would often agree as to the particular change of bowling that is desirable; that, therefore, in many cases the captain may be as right as they are in the

course he is adopting ; and that his position is not one to be envied.

In county and other matches a committee chooses the eleven ; at the Universities and public schools the further onerous duty of selecting the side is also thrown on the captain, handicapped, in many instances, by a multitude of ignorant advisers, each recommending a different selection. We will pass this by and try to give a word of advice on other points. The glass is rising ; there has been rain over night ; if the sun comes out the wicket will play very difficult ; it may come out in ten minutes, it may in two hours, and a captain has won the toss. If ever a man desires the gift of correct prophecy he desires it now. When will the sun shine ? This is the question, and not being possessed of supernatural powers, what is a captain to do ? I humbly think that if the sun is out he had better put the opposite side in ; if not, go in himself. If the wicket is soft and just rolled, put a hitter in first ; it will play tolerably easy for twenty minutes,

and in that time a hitter may get thirty runs, and this may win a match. (Remember Massie's innings in the great International match of 1882.) But when in doubt, go in first, and trust to Providence for the rest; and always go in first in a one-day match. Modesty is a great virtue, but if a captain is a good bat he should go in high, or even first; if he is the best bowler he should begin, and not go off early because he is captain; in fact, he should be possessed of the right medium, a half-way house between conceit and modesty. Of the two vices he had better be over-conscious of his own powers than over-modest.

When in the field the management of the bowling and the placing of the field is very difficult. Begin, as it is obvious you should, with your two best bowlers; and, as a rule, put your best bowler on if possible to a new man after a wicket has fallen, as he is more likely to get a new man out. An inferior bowler may enable a new bat to get his eye in, so that he will be able afterwards to hit

about the good bowlers. A captain should be able quickly to judge of the play of a batsman, as to which is his favourite hit, and place the field accordingly. This seems easy, but there are many captains who appear blind as far as this is concerned. I remember one University match where one man scored a hundred, and not till he had got over sixty did the rival captain put an extra short-leg to stop his favourite stroke—off his legs. When a hitter like Jessop begins work, I know it is easy to say that a captain should keep his head, whilst I am well aware that it is extremely difficult for him to do so; but there are some rules that ought to be observed. If you have a bowler who can break the ball, try him, for if the hitter runs out and tries to hit a ball and does not quite get at the pitch, the ball may break past his bat and he is bowled or stumped. Remember also to instruct your best bowler to bowl a good length rather wide of the off stump. The hitter sooner or later will have a slog, and will very likely be caught somewhere

on the off side. If, as sometimes happens, the wickets are pitched near one boundary, don't put your slow bowler on the end where an airy sky-scraper will fall over the boundary—put him on, instead, at the end where there is plenty of room for the deep fields to get a catch. Another bit of policy, I think, is sound—that is, not to be in a hurry to change the bowling. Some captains, I notice, seem to change at nearly every over. The hitter is much more likely to get out to a good bowler than he is to an indiscriminate collection of bad length bowlers; for, naturally, bad length balls are what the hitter revels in, though I am well aware that Jessop, for instance, appears to be able to hit a good length ball in a way that is quite amazing. Lastly, take it easy as to time. See that your fields are in their proper places before the bowler begins the over; and bear in mind the golden rule of all—to tell your bowlers to bowl a good length wide of the off stump; there are more hitters got out if they adopt this policy, caught on the off side

to such balls, than any other way. An old cricketer may here be permitted to indulge in an old memory, namely, the genuine shooter, which sealed the fate of all sloggers, and which, alas, is now never seen.

To know when to declare the innings at an end depends on many circumstances—the state of the wicket, the batting strength of your opponents, your own bowling strength, and how much time there is left. Some captains, notably Mr. F. S. Jackson, think that you ought to declare when it is possible for the other side to get the runs in the time, arguing that they will try and win the match by adopting a freer style, and that therefore you have a better chance of getting them out. If you declare when there are two hours left for play, and three hundred and fifty runs to get to win, all that your rivals will do is to stick, play maiden after maiden, and score at the rate of thirty runs per hour. Unless they are very bad they cannot be got out, and a drawn match is the result. There is a great deal of truth in this view, but in

important matches it seems to me that the fear of losing is the predominant feeling, and that the side which goes in last adopts invariably the timid course, and, fearing to risk defeat, plays the poking game.

To sum up, an ideal captain should be an excellent judge of the game, be possessed of an imperturbable coolness, a calm temper, and firmness of character, and should have besides a cheerful and popular manner. To possess all these qualities is given to very few, and as a consequence bad captains are many. Naturally, as it is difficult for one professional to have much control over his brethren, there have been few professionals who have succeeded as captains ; but George Parr and Shrewsbury were, and are, good and capable captains. V. E. Walker, Mitchell, Webbe, Shuter, Lord Hawke, and Hornby were all excellent. The first, from his well-known and well-deserved popularity, his great knowledge of the game, and his keenness, I reckon to have been perhaps the best captain that ever lived ; and Trott the Australian, in the

season of 1896, proved himself to be quite in the first rank of captains. The post is a thankless one, very easy to criticise, and seldom do you see the press, for instance, give it adequate notice.

UMPIRING

One reason why umpiring is often bad is, in the first place, because it is very difficult; in the second place, because none but professionals act in all but a few matches. In saying this I do not wish to cast any aspersions on professionals, but as professionals they are more likely to exist on terms of *bon camaraderie* with their brother professionals—they cannot be in an entirely independent position. The chief difficulty is to give correct decisions on leg-before-wicket appeals and runs out. There are, of course, some obvious cases, but the instances of l.b.w., where it is a question of the nicest judgment, are numerous. How often does one see at Lords a ball delivered from the Pavilion end

which apparently pitches dead straight, is missed by the batsman, and yet misses the wicket. If it had hit the batsman on the leg you would have blamed the umpire for not giving him out, and yet he would have been right and the critic wrong. As a matter of fact, to bowlers round the wicket, unless the ball is right up, it is generally right to judge that the batsman is not out. The line of the ball delivered with the hand wide away from the bowling wicket makes it almost impossible that a short ball can both pitch straight on the wicket and then go on and hit the stumps. At the same time I think the benefit of the doubt, which by an unwritten law of cricket seems invariably given to the batsman, might in this particular be given to the bowler. It is bad play to put the leg in front of the wicket, and in these days of gigantic run-getting the bowler ought to have the benefit of the doubt, and not the batsman. An umpire has many things to think about—he has to count the balls, he has to look at the bowler's feet to see that he

does not go over or wide of the crease ; he ought to look at the arm of some bowlers to see that they do not throw. I may note here, in passing, that as it is impossible for an umpire to look at the same second at a man's feet and hand, so is it possible for a dishonest bowler to bowl a no-ball by going over the crease, and to throw the next ball, having almost forced the umpire to look at his feet and not his hand. He has to determine any question that may arise as to l.b.w., runs out, catches at the wicket and occasionally elsewhere ; call wide if necessary, see no short runs are scored, announce the fact of boundary hits to the scorers, and thoroughly understand the rules. This is a great list, and has only to be set out in order to show that the post is no sinecure. We hope bowlers will call to mind the remark of old Jemmy Grundy when dismissing about the twelfth frivolous appeal—"Not hout, and yer knows it."

CRICKET REFORM

My readers may have become tired of the frequent use of the word "difficult" in what I have written, but I must perforce use the word again in writing of cricket reform. No reform is wanted in the summers when the weather makes the wickets soft and in favour of the bowlers, because what reforms may be said to be necessary for hard wickets ought to be in the direction of doing something to make batting less easy, and there is not the slightest necessity for doing this in wet years. The ideal to be kept in view is to arrive at some condition of things which shall ensure a sort of equality between attack and defence, and that condition of things is not found to-day. On soft wickets the batsmen appear to be impotent; on hard the bowlers appear to be similarly afflicted. We seem to have struck on a cycle of hard seasons, and the run-getting is so enormous that drawn games are beginning to be the

rule and not the exception ; and yet for the next two years we may have bad weather, and a new rule that might have been of benefit to the game this year, will be found useless or harmful next year. The subject is not one on which I have at all made up my mind, but the question comes repeatedly to me as to whether human ingenuity cannot devise some means whereby the hard wickets may be made by some sort of treatment, not dangerous, but more difficult. Why should pitches be made so deadly smooth ? Any duffer gets runs now. Let a little more grass be left on the wicket, as there used to be when the scythe and not the mowing machine was used. A possibly crude suggestion this, but we had better fun in the days when the bowlers had more to help them. The subject, however, must here be dismissed for the present.

VII

GIANTS OF THE GAME

THERE have, of course, been giants from the early ages of cricket to the present day. The academic question as to who were the giants till the days of William Lillywhite, Cobbett, and Jem Broadbridge is interesting only to antiquarians. I have my opinions and my interests on the subject, but my readers are not all enthusiasts, and few of them can be expected to enter into my tastes. William Lambert, the hero of a double century in one match, the conqueror single-handed at single wicket of the famous Squire Osbaldeston and T. C. Howard, is commonly reckoned to have been the champion up to the year 1827; but I propose to begin from the year 1827, the date of the introduction of round-hand bowling, as a starting-point for our

calculations. As William Lillywhite was the first round-hand bowler of any note, so may he be considered our first hero. What his prowess may have been if he had played on our wickets it is impossible to say, but he must have been a bowler of great accuracy, not because he was hardly ever known to have bowled a wide (for this might have been said of Alfred Shaw and many others), but because of the amazing number of wickets which he got. It is difficult to take up any score of a match in which he took part without observing at least eight wickets falling to his share, often more. Everybody knows the figure of the old man in the engraving of the Sussex and Kent match, five feet four inches in height, wearing a tall hat, and apparently about to deliver the ball straight through the body of the famous E. G. Wenham. He was, if tradition is to be believed, a strictly fair round-arm bowler, and what we should call slow. In 1829, on one of the few occasions when the Gentlemen beat the Players, they had Lilly-

white and Broadbridge to help them. These two got the Players out for 24 and 37, eight of the Players getting nought in the first innings, and four in the second, and old Lillywhite got fourteen wickets. His great feats are far too many to enumerate, so I will content myself with saying that the man who introduced, or at any rate was the first scientific exponent of round-arm bowling is clearly destined for a niche in the temple of the immortals.

The next hero we will take will be the renowned Alfred Mynn. I have had many a talk with old Martingell, whom I believe to be the last survivor of the days of William Clarke, Alfred Mynn, and Fuller Pilch, and he has told me several times, what a careful perusal of cricket scores made me suspect, that, as a bat, Mynn was in the main a hitter, with a somewhat faulty defence. He was perhaps the champion single-wicket player, a hard hitter and a very fast bowler constituting the most valuable gifts for play of this description ; but as a bowler he must

have been excelled by few. Like all the bowlers of that date, he was, strictly speaking, round-hand, the arm being delivered a little below the shoulder, and he used to walk up to the wicket; and we read that it was one of the grand sights of cricket to see Alfred Mynn deliver the ball. He was only fifty-four when he died in 1861, but he played his first match at Lord's in 1832.

Up to the time of George Parr, Fuller Pilch was the champion batsman; and there is strong evidence to support the conclusion that he was the originator of what we understand as forward play. Old Clarke used to say that Pilch was the man who played him best, for he used not to leave his ground for every ball, or stand fast, but he watched and observed the length, and suited his play accordingly. Greater praise than this cannot be given, and old Clarke's lobs in those days appeared to be the terror of most batsmen. Pilch was one of the immortal five who made Kent the great

cricket county. And with five such mighty cricketers

As Felix Wenman, Hillyer, Fuller Pilch, and
Alfred Mynn,
Was but natural to win.

As may be inferred from his forward play, Pilch was a tall man, and he was a most consistent scorer. Like Alfred Mynn, he was famous in single-wicket matches; but while both were very ready to play anybody in England, I suspect each was afraid of the other, for no match was ever played between these Kentish heroes. Pilch was a fair bowler, but nothing like the same class as Mynn, and, as cutting is no good in single-wicket matches, a very fast bowler like Mynn is hard to score against, being difficult to drive: so Pilch would probably have not been quite a match at single-wicket for Mynn, but as a bat he stood far higher: in an age, as compared with the present, of small scores and rough wickets, his runs were of far more credit to him than centuries are to many cricketers now.

I come now to George Parr, a great Nottingham batsman. The very name Nottingham strikes an old cricketer of my age with wonder, respect, and awe. I am often thinking to myself, when I see ignorant critics and journalists inclined to jeer at Nottingham cricket, how little do those people remember of cricket history. I say that if not another cricketer was ever born in Nottingham, it would still take years for any other country to come up to Notts. Yorkshire and Surrey are the two nearest; the first, however, is the only real rival. Surrey has a fine record, but so many of her latest cricketers are, and have been, importations, that it is doubtful how they would have stood since Jupp left off play with only genuine natives. Surrey's great lights in the days when only natives represented counties, that is, between the years 1858 and 1870, were a grand lot. Caffyn, Cæsar, Mortlock, Humphrey, Jupp, Stephenson, Lockyer, Griffith, Sewell, Pooley, Southerton, and, in later days, Maurice

Read, Abel, and Richardson, no doubt make a grand lot; but how few real Surrey men there have been since Jupp retired. Lohmann was Middlesex, Sharpe and Lockwood Notts, Beaumont Yorkshire, Hayward Cambridge, Henderson Monmouth, Bowley Northampton, Wood Kent, and Barratt Durham. I think that in batting the Surrey men are a little better, perhaps, than Yorkshire; in bowling they are far inferior. Caffyn, Griffith, Sewell, Southerton, and Richardson do not come up to Atkinson, Hodgson, Slinn, Freeman, Emmett, Peate, Allan Hill, Peel, and Ulyett. But to compare either with Notts, with a smaller population to draw from, is childish, as can be seen when one begins to go through the names. George Parr, Daft, Barnes, Shrewsbury, and Gunn, as I have said before, are five unique batsmen, far ahead of any five from any other county. I suppose Surrey would come next, after a long interval, with Caffyn, Mortlock, Stephenson, Jupp, and Abel, but there is a wide difference between them. Notts

can add to these Oscroft, Brampton, Summers, Selby, Wild, and Flowers; while such a lot of bowlers have never been seen, and probably never will be again, as Grundy, Wootton, Tinley, J. C. Shaw, A. Shaw, Morley, William and Martin M'Intyre, Flowers, Briggs, Barnes, Lockwood, and Attewell.

George Parr is dimly known to this generation as the great leg-hitter, but he had also one of the soundest of defences, and was a most consistent scorer on all wickets. From the year 1850 to about 1863 he was about the best bat in the world. He watched the ball well, and though not a big hitter except to leg, scored fast. His leg-hitting was of a kind that is not common: he did not hit square with a vertical bat, like Barnes, but swept the ball with a horizontal bat, sharp, and not square, and he was great at this hit off shortish leg-balls. The famous R. A. H. Mitchell could do this stroke as well as the square leg. Parr could throw the cricket ball more than 100 yards, which in those

days was useful where there were no boundaries ; he was a first-rate judge of a run ; and, lastly, he understood the game thoroughly, and was, perhaps, the best professional captain who ever lived. He also could bowl lobs fairly.

Mr. Mitchell had a short life in first-class cricket : in fact, it corresponded almost exactly with his Oxford career ; so it happens to be difficult to exactly estimate his powers. But I have talked with several of his contemporaries and have seen him myself, and I have found several who agree with me that if Mitchell had been able to devote himself to the game in the way that Jackson, Stoddart, and others do now, he would have been the second batsman of the world, next, in fact, to Grace. With great height, strength of arm and wrist, punishing powers all round the wicket, a temperament that made him equal to a supreme effort when it was wanted, and great patience and knowledge of the game, Mitchell was a terror to his opponents. He could play well on bad wickets and was a

tremendous leg-hitter. Slow bowling was not so common in his days, and if he had a weak spot, it was that when he first went in he was apt to get out to slows, often caught at deep square leg. The modern batsman, sooner than run the chance of being caught in this way, leaves leg-balls alone or pushes them along the ground. Mitchell used to say, and I agree with him, that if leg-balls were not to be hit, cricket was not worth playing.

Readers of cricket literature may think they have had enough put before them about W. G. Grace, but in a chapter about heroes of the game he must be written about again. Grace has played first-class cricket for thirty-two years, and amidst all the changes of styles of bowling, vicissitudes of wickets, for twenty-five years of that time he has stood alone: no rival could be reckoned in the same class with him. From 1866 to 1876 he scored hundreds as often as the next bats scored fifties; his presence made a weak eleven strong, and after half-an-hour of his

batting the other side was demoralised. He never flinched from the fast bowling on rough wickets, and yet such was his resource and quickness of eye, that it is astonishing to remember how few times he has ever been hit by the ball. He has a bat in his hands, and with that he hits the ball, and there is no more to be said. To fast bowling he never looked as if any ball presented any difficulty whatever to him; he would place good length balls somewhere past short leg, place that field where you liked. He was a fast or medium-pace bowler, bowling for the Gentlemen against the Players before most first-class cricketers had cut their first tooth; and, to this day, notwithstanding his age and weight, you could hardly leave him out of your first eleven. So prodigious has been his batting, that people forget that for several years he was one of the most successful bowlers in England, and one of the best fields. For ten years or thereabouts he got more than a hundred wickets in the season; while in 1875 and 1877 he got more wickets

than any one else in England. Grace had no objection to being hit (the greatest bowlers never have), but he would bowl half volleys to some batsmen for a catch at deep square leg, and many a wicket has he got in this way. In the ten years between 1870 and 1880 Grace scored twice as many runs as any other cricketer; and in the same period only Alfred Shaw had bowled more wickets, while his batting average was 18 points per innings higher than the second man's. Between 1880 and 1890 Shrewsbury has a slightly higher average, but Grace is second in the list; while in bowling only Lohmann, Peate, and Watson got more wickets, though he was more knocked about. The main element of Grace's batting was that he could score off balls that most batsmen would be content merely to stop; he never let balls alone, he always hit them. He did not appear even to play forward or back; he played over the crease, and it seemed as if his gigantic size and weight made the ball to go, and not wrist and forearm.

If one were asked to name three players of to-day who would be described as stylists (I apologise for the word), one would select Palaret, A. P. Lucas, and N. F. Druce. Grace never was a stylist in this sense. Effectiveness is the word in batting and bowling; there is style in bowling as well as batting—in fact, the poetry of motion is as conspicuous in one as in the other. Johnny Wisden and Allan Hill are typical of the first, and Palaret and A. P. Lucas of the last. Grace while bowling used to slouch up to the wicket with an ungainly movement of the arm stretched out at full length, and in a stooping posture; but it was a ball very difficult to judge the length of as well as the direction; a ball you thought you could hit to leg you missed and were given out l.b.w. Lastly, to write about Grace is merely to say that in the world of cricket he stands alone—he has never been approached, and in his prime he occupied a class by himself. For some time, Grace with ten third-class players would probably

have beaten the best eleven you could choose : more cannot be said.

I have stated elsewhere that Spofforth is the greatest bowler the world has ever seen, and so he may be discussed here. Spofforth is a tall man and bowled with arm high above the shoulder. Originally he was a very fast bowler with a natural break, but after he had been in England, without losing his break he became master of that supreme art of varying his pace without alteration of action. He studied the art of bowling, and very quickly found out a spot on the wicket. He had two styles—one a grand fast bowler with great accuracy, the other a head-bowler of all paces, possessing the power of close concentration on his work and great determination. Space does not allow me to go fully into his performances, but my opinion is that in games Grace among batsmen and Spofforth among bowlers are unrivalled in their different lines. I should like to speak of many more cricketers, like A. G. Steel, most fascinating of amateurs ;



George Ulyett, and others, but space does not permit.

The last hero must be George Lohmann. No greater tragedy has ever been seen in cricket than the breakdown in health of this player in the autumn of 1892, which illness has practically finished his cricket career. This may be said to have lasted eight seasons, though in 1896 he was still a good bowler. Lohmann, I think, was one of the greatest cricketers that ever lived. He was chiefly known as a bowler, but he was a determined hitter, who often came off when runs were most wanted; and in the slips, most important of all places, he has never been excelled, or even equalled, in his power of catching. Of all the players I have seen, I reckon Lohmann to have been the best slip, second only to Spofforth as a bowler, and a most useful bat. Lohmann bowls with high delivery, medium pace, with that sort of action that produces a dropping ball most difficult to judge the length of. They appear to be half volleys, but as a matter of fact

they are of good length, and they break back very quickly ; but he could bowl a fast ball that came in from leg, and, like all other bowlers who break, he got a lot of wickets with plain straight balls that went straight from the pitch. He never minded being hit, and in the six years beginning in 1885 he actually got 1087 wickets, an average of 161 a year, at a cost of about 14 runs a wicket. Surrey had been under a cloud from about 1870 till Lohmann came out in 1884 and 1885, and mainly by his efforts she rushed to the top of the tree : in fact, Surrey owes nearly as much to Lohmann as Gloucestershire does to W. G. Grace. There was a sparkle about Lohmann's play in every way : he made matches interesting ; he did not bowl maidens, so the batting did not become dull. His fielding was fascinating in its quickness and brilliancy ; his hitting was sometimes severe, and his whole play was charged with pluck. Take him altogether, in any representative eleven to play against the immortals, I should, I think, after Grace, select Lohmann.

VIII

UNIVERSITY CRICKET MATCHES

THERE is a sense of continuity and of permanence about the University match that is soothing in these days of change. Headmasters have power to knock a public school match on the head ; the borderland between Gentlemen and Players is becoming very narrow ; counties may come and go, but the University match, it is safe to predict, will go on, humanly speaking, for ever. Bishops, both Anglican and Roman, judges—unfortunately for them, no Prime Ministers—scholars, and clergy without number have played in these matches. Though in these days the bowling is often weak, still somehow the game is never drawn, and more than in any other match does the nervousness of the combatants upset the calculations of judges

and bettors of trifling sums, made for the sentiment of the thing, to show which side has your sympathy. He is an evil creature who, if he bets at all, bets against his own University. The University match, like the Irish Secretaryship, has been the grave of many a reputation. John Walker made 19 runs in six innings; Lord Cobham made 61 in seven innings; A. W. Ridley exactly the runs in exactly the same number of innings; R. D. Walker 84 runs in ten innings. All these were men who played for the Gentlemen while they were at the University, and were all excellent batsmen.

The first match took place in 1827, and was not finished, but Oxford would certainly have won; and the teams met intermittently till 1838. Since then the match has been an annual fixture, and has been played out to a finish every year except 1827, 1844, and 1888, when, though four days were given to it, the weather triumphed in a bad sense. The University match makes the great opportunity for old friends to meet,

and though, as in every other walk of life, the crowds are a nuisance and a hindrance to the enthusiast's real enjoyment, still Lord's is, after all, the real ground to enjoy cricket on ; and long may it be played there, urgently desirable as it is that the M.C.C. should abolish carriages and let us walk round the ground in peace.

It must appear odd to the University player of to-day, to whom the University match is *the* match of his lifetime, to be told that in 1869 no less a man than the late Attorney-General, Sir R. T. Reid, was absent during the second innings of Oxford, and the present Bishop of Liverpool was the same ; whilst in the following year Oxford began and finished the match with only ten men. The late Lord Dudley was absent one innings in 1841, and one from each side were absent in the second innings in 1850. These facts justify us in concluding that the play was conducted far less systematically in those days. If a man found it inconvenient, he very likely declined to

play, and others threw their captain over in a way that the modern Zingaro and Quidnunc has been known to do: even as late as 1850 did this take place. Since then things have altered; but though we are all proud of the history of the old University matches, there is little doubt that many of the earlier elevens, like those in the Eton and Harrow matches, were more or less scratch teams.

The rules which qualify a man to play for his University are somewhat elastic, and, I think, need revision. No man is allowed to play for more than four years; this has been the unwritten rule since 1865, when R. D. Walker had grown grey in the service for Oxford and played his fifth year. But within this four years' limit there is an elasticity that is as surprising as it is absurd. As far as I know, if a man resides one term at any college, and keeps his name on the books, but never sees his University except for that one term, he has, nevertheless, qualified himself to play for four years.

Though this preposterous rule is not acted up to now, it frequently happens that a man plays who has not been in residence that term at all; and the rule, I contend, should be altered on account of the injustice that is done to the *bonâ fide* residents who long to gain the coveted honour of playing for their University. There is one way in which Cambridge is at a disadvantage, namely, that their honours men get their degrees at the end of the third year—if they leave the University for business purposes they are lost—while the Oxford honours men get theirs a year later. A rational man from each University would soon settle the question quite fairly for both sides if they were to meet and discuss it.

The late venerable Bishop of St. Andrews, who only died a few years ago, played in the first University match in 1827, and clean bowled seven Cambridge wickets; and on the Cambridge side is to be seen the name of W. G. Cookesley, most famous of scholars, and a very well-known Eton master. Two

men played five times in this match, the famous C. D. Marsham and R. D. Walker, both of Oxford. C. D. Marsham was perhaps the best bowler that ever played for either side: as straight and as accurate as a professional, he was the sheet-anchor of both Oxford and the amateurs in his day. He played five years against Cambridge, and only lost one match, the famous game which the renowned J. Makinson won for Cambridge almost by himself. C. D. Marsham took forty Cambridge wickets, or an average of four an innings, at an average cost of nine runs a wicket. Of all the players who played four years, very few have won on every occasion. I think I am correct in saying that S. C. Voules is the only Oxonian, and that T. A. Anson, W. de St. Croix, and W. Mills are the only three Cantabs; and of these Voules's is the most remarkable feat, as he played so late as 1863, 1864, 1865, and 1866.

A couple of very famous Cambridge players in the persons of Woods and

M'Gregor would very likely have been added to this list, as they had some way the best of the drawn match. But the comparatively few men who have played in four winning elevens shows that in the long-run the matches have been very even, and there is every reason to suppose that this will always be the case. Both Universities have grand grounds, almost too good perhaps: they show up the weakness in bowling. Both get the leading public schools, though certain of these seem to favour one or the other: Oxford secures the majority of Eton and nearly monopolises Winchester, while Cambridge gets most Uppingham and Marlborough boys. In the last twenty years Cambridge has had rather the best of it, though since 1891 victory has gone in alternate years between them. But from 1878 Cambridge has had a fine lot of cricketers—A. P. Lucas, E. Lyttelton, A. Lyttelton, A. G. Steele, Bligh, C. T. Studd, G. B. Studd, Wright, Bainbridge, Woods, M'Gregor, Streatfield, Jackson, N. F. Druce, and several

others ; and Oxford has not been quite so strong, but in C. D. Marsham's days in the fifties and Mitchell's days in the sixties, Oxford had the better of the argument ; and Cambridge largely owes her numerical superiority to the five consecutive wins in 1839 to 1843.

It might be thought that, in a purely amateur match such as this, where bowling is generally weak, there would have been more individual innings of a hundred made than in Gentlemen and Players at Lord's. But up to date, twenty hundreds have been scored in the University matches and twenty-two in the other. Seven hundreds were made in Gentlemen and Players up to 1869, while not till 1870 did W. Yardley set all the cricket world talking of the first hundred of the University match. It is the old story of nerve ; for so many men in this the great match cannot play up to their true form. Since 1870, however, in Gentlemen and Players there have been sixteen centuries played against twenty in the other, and W.

G. Grace has scored six of them. As Yardley was the first, so up to the present he holds the proud position of being the only man who on two separate occasions has made a hundred ; and of all the grand innings played by anybody in these matches, the hundred made by Yardley in 1870 almost takes the first place. The match looked hopelessly bad for Cambridge, who were only twelve runs on and had lost five wickets ; and Lord's was not by any means the easy ground it is now, as Cambridge found out to their cost the following year. But in a short time Yardley had pulverised the bowling : before you knew where you were, the bowlers in his hands had become helpless : fortunately, too, Jack Dale, the other end, was all the time playing a most scientific game, and a good total was reached. But out of 198 runs made from the bat, Yardley and Dale scored 167.

The next year, 1871, there was an old-fashioned wicket at Lord's ; not a dangerous one, but of a kind I should like to see in these days, when the ball shot and came

down the hill; and the finest piece of fast bowling ever seen in this match was given by Sam Butler for Oxford. He bowled from the pavilion end all the innings, and in 97 balls he got all ten wickets for 38 runs, all but two having been clean bowled, and some of the Cambridge eleven could really bat. Yardley, Money, Thornton, and A. T. Scott were all good, three of them up to Gentlemen and Players form; but the pace of the ball, its break and its shoot, wanted Grace to master it, and Grace only would have played the bowling that day. Butler got five wickets, four clean bowled in the second innings, and so for the whole match had the astounding figures of fifteen wickets for 95 runs,—a feat not to be seen again by this generation at all events. Cambridge had their turn the year after in a match which shows the old vicissitudes of the game. Oxford had the dreaded Sam Butler to bowl again, as well as his most efficient coadjutor, C. K. Francis, who now presides over the police court in South-West London. They had be-

sides Townshend, Law, Ottaway, than whom no player who ever lived had a stronger defence, Hadow, Tylecote, Harris, altogether eight old choices to the five of Cambridge; and yet Cambridge, on winning the toss, amassed 388 runs, a score that was not equalled until Cambridge, in 1892, made exactly the same total. The wicket was, I suppose, easier than it had been the former year: at any rate, Sam Butler could only get three wickets at a cost of 103 runs. Oxford had to bat at five o'clock after many hours' fielding, and the boot was soon seen to be on the other leg, for in 68 balls W. H. Powys secured six Oxford wickets, five of them clean bowled. Next morning, on a wicket rather damaged by rain, Powys took seven more wickets, securing in the whole match, against a strong batting eleven, thirteen wickets at rather over three runs each! These two great fast bowling performances took place in two consecutive years, and stand as, on the whole, the two greatest records of their description. In this same

match of 1872 Yardley scored his second century, but the real credit of Cambridge's long innings may justly be put down to the then young Etonians, Longman and Tabor, who for the first time in these matches put up 100 before the wicket fell.

As showing how completely calculations may be upset in cricket, we can turn to 1884 and 1885. In the former year Oxford played no fewer than seven freshmen, and won the match easily by seven wickets. The following year they had eight old choices, and won the toss; but Cambridge won the match by seven wickets. The public, as a rule, like the side that plays the most old choices, but they must have had a rude awakening in 1885. So frequently does nervousness show itself in this match, that a side is fortunate if it has players who have gained experience in playing for a first-class county. Such was the experience of the famous K. J. Key in 1884, for he had won his spurs in playing in a well-remembered match at the Oval against Lancashire.

If a young player has faced such an ordeal he will be better prepared to overcome his nervousness at the University match. I seldom indulge in prophecy, but I anticipate that Cambridge will find Oxford a far stronger side in 1898 than they were in 1897. In 1897 Oxford had some excellent batsmen in Fane, Bromley-Martin, Champain, and Eccles, but none of them had taken part in this great match before, and only Fane had been seen in first-class cricket elsewhere. The result was that they played nervously in the match; but with a year's experience of first-class cricket at Oxford and county cricket, these batsmen, if they all play again, will probably appear in a very different light. In the Cambridge eleven Burnup, Wilson, Druce, Jessop, Shine, and Bray had all played, not only for their University in previous years, but also in first-class county matches, having obtained thereby an experience far beyond that gained by Oxford.

The great R. A. H. Mitchell was captain in 1863, 1864, and 1865, and won all three

matches, having himself played in 1864 one of those monumental innings that live for ever. This was in the days of low scoring. Cambridge had only two bowlers, and Oxford had a very strong batting side, Mitchell himself, Case, Tritton, F. R. Evans, Frederick, R. D. Walker, Voules, Wright, and Maitland, altogether making one of the strongest batting sides that either University has ever turned out, and they only wanted 125 runs to win; but if it had not been for the splendid not-out innings of 55 scored by Mitchell himself, Cambridge would have won. This innings is fondly spoken of by all Oxonians.

We all grow old, but a great delight of cricket is that as long as you live and can see, the joys of looking on at the game never decline, and of all matches the University match, to a University man, is the most enjoyable. You are very keen for your side to win, the cricket is very good, and the players are, or ought to be, about in their prime. Luckily, also, the weakness of the bowling is counterbalanced to a great extent

by the nervousness of the batsmen. Anyhow, the matches are, unless weather is very foul, played to a finish, and your pleasure is not spoilt by a series of drawn games, as seems to be the case even in county contests.

THE END

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